

CLAIMS

It is claimed:

1. A method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search, the method comprising

entering a search request into a search request display

transmitting the search request

receiving a search response responsive to the search request, the search response

including

at least one hit corresponding to the search request

an ad having a dial link, the dial link having a display portion for indicating

availability of initiation of a phone call with a merchant associated with the dial link

instructions for triggering a multi-leg phone call with a merchant phone

number associated with the dial link and a user phone number

displaying the search response including the display portion of the dial link

recognizing activation of the dial link

generating a call trigger in accordance with the instructions in the search response, the

call trigger for initiating a multi-leg phone call with the user phone number and the merchant

phone number.

2. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 1 further comprising displaying a merchant page.

3. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 1 wherein the dial link includes a merchant identifier.

4. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 3 wherein the merchant identifier comprises a database key for retrieving a merchant phone number.
5. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 1 wherein the dial link includes a merchant phone number.
6. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 1, generating the call trigger further comprising sending a message to a billing system to charge the merchant for the user activating the dial link.
7. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 1 further comprising
 - activating a browser
 - pointing the browser to a search system
 - the browser receiving the search request display.
8. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 1 wherein the search response is a web page.
9. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 1 further comprising receiving a user phone number entered or selected from one or more previously entered phone numbers.
10. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 1, wherein activating the dial link comprises a pointing device clicking on the dial link.

11. A method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search, the method comprising
- receiving ad purchase data, the ad purchase data including an ad display condition, ad content information, a merchant on-line address and a merchant phone number
 - receiving a search request from a search requester
 - obtaining a search result in response to the search request
 - preparing a search response including
 - one or more displayable hits
 - a displayable ad based upon the ad content information, the ad further having a dial link, the dial link having a display portion for indicating availability of initiation of a phone call with a merchant associated with the dial link
 - instructions for triggering a multi-leg phone call with the merchant phone number and a user phone number
 - transmitting the search response to the search requester.
12. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 11, wherein the ad display condition includes at least one of key words, strings, concepts, URLs, portions of URLs.
13. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 11 wherein the search requester comprises a user at a client computer.
14. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 11 wherein the triggering instructions are included in the dial link.

15. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 14 wherein the triggering instructions include instructions for displaying a page at the merchant on-line address.

16. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 11 wherein the search response is a web page.

17. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 11 wherein the dial link includes a merchant identifier.

18. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 17 wherein the merchant identifier comprises the merchant phone number.

19. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 17 wherein the merchant identifier is associated with the merchant phone number.

20. The method of telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 11 further comprising sending a message to a billing system for charging for triggering the multi-leg phone call.

21. Apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search comprising

a user input device

a display device

a processor

a memory

wherein the processor and the memory comprise circuits and software for

- entering a search request into a search request display
- transmitting the search request
- receiving a search response responsive to the search request, the search response including
 - at least one hit corresponding to the search request
 - an ad having a dial link, the dial link having a display portion for indicating availability of initiation of a phone call with a merchant associated with the dial link
 - instructions for triggering a multi-leg phone call with a merchant phone number associated with the dial link and a user phone number
 - displaying the search response including the display portion of the dial link
 - recognizing activation of the dial link
 - generating a call trigger in accordance with the instructions in the search response, the call trigger for initiating a multi-leg phone call with the user phone number and the merchant phone number.

22. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 21 wherein the processor and the memory further comprise circuits and software for displaying a merchant page.

23. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 21 wherein the dial link includes a merchant identifier.

24. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 23 wherein the merchant identifier comprises a database key for retrieving a merchant phone number.

25. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 21 wherein the dial link includes a merchant phone number.

26. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 21, wherein the processor and the memory further comprise circuits and software for sending a message to a billing system to charge the merchant for the user activating the dial link.

27. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 21, the processor and the memory further comprise circuits and software for

activating a browser

pointing the browser to a search system

receiving the search request display in the browser.

28. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 21 wherein the search response is a web page.

29. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 21, wherein the processor and the memory further comprise circuits and software for receiving a user phone number entered or selected from one or more previously entered phone numbers.

30. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 21, wherein the circuits and software for activating the dial link recognize the user input device clicking on the dial link.

31. Apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search comprising

a user input device

a display device

a processor

a memory

wherein the processor and the memory comprise circuits and software for

receiving ad purchase data, the ad purchase data including an ad display

condition, ad content information, a merchant on-line address and a merchant phone number

receiving a search request from a search requester

obtaining a search result in response to the search request

preparing a search response including

one or more displayable hits

a displayable ad based upon the ad content information, the ad further

having a dial link, the dial link having a display portion for indicating availability of initiation of a phone call with a merchant associated with the dial link

instructions for triggering a multi-leg phone call with the merchant

phone number and a user phone number

transmitting the search response to the search requester.

32. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 31, wherein the ad display condition includes at least one of key words, strings, concepts, URLs, portions of URLs.

33. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 31 wherein the search requester comprises a user at a client computer.

34. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 31 wherein the triggering instructions are included in the dial link.

35. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 34 wherein the triggering instructions include instructions for displaying a page at the merchant on-line address.

36. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 31 wherein the search response is a web page.

37. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 31 wherein the dial link includes a merchant identifier.

38. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 37 wherein the merchant identifier comprises the merchant phone number.

39. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 37 wherein the merchant identifier is associated with the merchant phone number.

40. The apparatus for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 31, wherein the processor and the memory further comprise circuits and software for sending a message to a billing system for charging for triggering the multi-leg phone call.

41. A computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search, the computer program product stored on a machine readable medium comprising computer software having instructions for causing a processor to

- enter a search request into a search request display

- transmit the search request

- receive a search response responsive to the search request, the search response including

 - at least one hit corresponding to the search request

 - an ad having a dial link, the dial link having a display portion for indicating availability of initiation of a phone call with a merchant associated with the dial link

 - instructions for triggering a multi-leg phone call with a merchant phone number associated with the dial link and a user phone number

 - display the search response including the display portion of the dial link

 - recognize activation of the dial link

 - generate a call trigger in accordance with the instructions in the search response, the call trigger for initiating a multi-leg phone call with the user phone number and the merchant phone number.

42. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 41 further comprising computer software having instructions for causing the processor to display a merchant page.

43. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 41 wherein the dial link includes a merchant identifier.

44. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 43 wherein the merchant identifier comprises a database key for retrieving a merchant phone number.

45. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 41 wherein the dial link includes a merchant phone number.

46. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 41, wherein the instructions for causing the processor to generate the call trigger further comprise instructions for causing the processor to send a message to a billing system to charge the merchant for the user activating the dial link.

47. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 41, the computer software having instructions for causing the processor to

activate a browser

point the browser to a search system

receiving the search request display in the browser.

48. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 41 wherein the search response is a web page.

49. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 41 further comprising computer software having instructions for causing the processor to receive a user phone number entered or selected from one or more previously entered phone numbers.

50. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 41, wherein the instructions for causing the processor to activate the dial link comprise instructions for causing the processor to recognize a pointing device clicking on the dial link.

51. A computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search, the computer program product stored on a machine readable medium comprising computer software having instructions for causing a processor to

receiving ad purchase data, the ad purchase data including an ad display condition, ad content information, a merchant on-line address and a merchant phone number

receiving a search request from a search requester

obtaining a search result in response to the search request

preparing a search response including

one or more displayable hits

a displayable ad based upon the ad content information, the ad further having a dial link, the dial link having a display portion for indicating availability of initiation of a phone call with a merchant associated with the dial link

instructions for triggering a multi-leg phone call with the merchant phone number and a user phone number

transmitting the search response to the search requester.

52. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 51, wherein the ad display condition includes at least one of key words, strings, concepts, URLs, portions of URLs.

53. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 51 wherein the search requester comprises a user at a client computer.

54. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 51 wherein the triggering instructions are included in the dial link.

55. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 54 wherein the triggering instructions include instructions for displaying a page at the merchant on-line address.

56. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 51 wherein the search response is a web page.

57. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 51 wherein the dial link includes a merchant identifier.

58. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 57 wherein the merchant identifier comprises the merchant phone number.

59. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 57 wherein the merchant identifier is associated with the merchant phone number.

60. The computer program product for telephone call initiation through an on-line search of claim 51 further comprising computer software having instructions for causing the processor to send a message to a billing system for charging for triggering the multi-leg phone call.

61. A method of reporting the effectiveness of an advertising campaign using a telecommunications system for connecting a telephone call, the method comprising

accumulating calling information associated with a dial link

in response to a request for a report, formulating the report based on the accumulated calling information for the dial link

formatting the report for electronic transmission

transmitting the formatted report electronically to an entity associated with the advertising campaign.